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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFSS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002117

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/PSC: X.GUTIERREZ AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/05/2017

TAGS: KPKO PHUM KCRM KWMN ET ER

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UN EFFORTS TO COMBAT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

REF: A. STATE 089356 (NOTAL)

¶B. 06 ADDIS ABABA 1951 (NOTAL)

Classified By: ACTING DCM ERIC WONG. REASON: 1.4 (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. As in the previous year, neither host government officials nor Ethiopian media have reported significant sexual misconduct or trafficking in persons (TIP) attributable to UN peacekeeping personnel in Ethiopia. However, both NGOs and staff of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) have received anecdotal field reports of sexual exploitation in the form of soliciting underage prostitutes. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Per ref A, Post contacted the Ethiopian MFA, officials at UNMEE's Addis Ababa headquarters, and NGOs working in the Tigray Region regarding UN efforts to prevent TIP and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) activity among UN peacekeeping forces in Ethiopia. UN forces in Ethiopia are primarily stationed on the Ethiopian and Eritrean border (Tigray Region of Ethiopia), serving in UNMEE.

¶3. (SBU) As in the previous year (ref B), the Ethiopian MFA reported not having received any information to suggest that either UNMEE civilian staff or peacekeeping forces have been involved in TIP or SEA activities. Locally engaged staff (LES) at post report that there is no popular perception of such activity in the nation's capital. In previous years, there have been rumors that several UNMEE military officers fathered children by local women, and that a few UNMEE personnel trafficked several Eritreans into Ethiopia, mostly young draft dodgers. Except for political refugees, Eritrea is largely not a destination of choice for Ethiopians.

¶4. (U) The Addis Ababa-based office of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Counter Trafficking Unit had no information to report, relating to alleged sexual misconduct or TIP activities attributable to UN peacekeeping personnel in Ethiopia.

ALLEGATIONS OF PROSTITUTION, BUT SCOPE UNKNOWN

¶5. (C) Post received information of alleged SEA from NGOs operating in the northern Tigray Region adjacent to the border with Eritrea, where most UNMEE peacekeepers are stationed. Field representatives of Project Concern International (PCI) allege that some UNMEE personnel are

paying female prostitutes (generally between the ages of 14-20) in Adigrat, Adwa, and other Tigrayan towns, for sexual favors. These relationships are allegedly consensual, but elders in the Tigray Region are reportedly increasingly concerned by reports of such activity and have begun to organize 'buddy' systems so that girls and young women do not have to travel unaccompanied to village markets and hand-dug wells. Post does not have statistics on the number of UNMEE peacekeepers involved in these solicitations, although PCI considers the number significant and believes that many more go unreported.

¶6. (C) Post discussed allegations of SEA and TIP with UNMEE headquarters staff in Addis Ababa. UNMEE officials reported receiving some complaints in the past of peacekeepers soliciting sex for payment from young women and girls, but highlighted UNMEE's "zero-tolerance" policy on SEA, as well as UNMEE's establishment of a Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) that is designing prevention and enforcement strategies. In addition to induction training for all new staff, CDU is organizing a series of interactive workshops specific to SEA- and TIP-related concerns. Information on SEA is to be posted on the UNMEE intranet. Aside from the allegations of solicitation, UN mission staff in Addis Ababa have not received any complaints regarding TIP or SEA activity in Ethiopia, nor have significant media reports regarding these issues emerged over the course of the last year.

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